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there. His father was not present. His matrilineal uncle has given the initial feast for him. The women of his own and neighbouring villages have all seen him, patted him, and rejoiced in his arrival. But all these are only the beginning of the rites for the newborn child. The next month is a busy one. Another feast must be held, and medicine and magic must be made to give him strength.

The mother divides her time between nursing him and tending her garden. The first week or two after birth the mother stays home with her child, lying most of the time in the dark house on the bamboo bed with the infant and nursing him whenever necessary. Two or three days after birth she feeds him a piece of baked taro which she has first chewed, and small quantities of this form part of the infant's diet from now on. The baby is not suckled at any regular time, but is given his mother's breast whenever he cries, or the mother thinks he is hungry. During these first few weeks of the infant's life his mother's work in the garden is done by her mother and mother's sister if they are not too old, or a grown-up daughter if she has one, or some other female clan relative. Babies may be born, live, or die, but work in the gardens must go on all the time.

After two weeks the mother of the infant resumes her work in the garden, nursing the child before she goes and immediately upon her return. She will often return earlier than the other women in order to nurse her child. The infant's maternal grandmother stays at home to look after him. When Lagina became pregnant all the women expressed sorrow because her mother was dead. Who would look after her child while she was working in the garden? They expressed this sorrow in the *Grimisi* dance, performed during the first pregnancy rites, by placing their hands on the head of the woman next to them. I was told later that Lagina's sister, Mana, recently divorced, who was living with Lagina, would look after the child. If the mother should be far away

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853 in the gardens and the baby cries for milk, the infant may
854 be suckled by another woman, if one with milk happens to be present. But this is not done normally, and usually only the mother nurses her child.

852 Within a few weeks after the birth a "doctor" is called to
789 make "medicine" which will make the newly-born infant
751 strong. In Lesu, the doctor for this kind of medicine was the elderly man Tsengali, and this is his medicine. He stands by the *purpura* tree and recites the following spell:—

Strong, strong, strong, strong.
Strong head,
Strong arm,
Strong breast,
Strong stomach,
Strong leg.

The spell contains the wish that each part of the infant's body mentioned become strong. As soon as he has finished his recitation Tsengali takes a small leaf from the tree, chews it, and spits the chewed leaf into a bigger leaf from the same tree, which he folds over it as a cup. Then he pours a little water over the chewed leaf and gives it to the infant to drink. This "medicine" is supposed to have a prophylactic value and prevent the infant from having sores and other ills, and in general to make him a strong child.
[853] There is some idea, which I was not able to understand very clearly, that the mother's milk may become contaminated by the food she eats, and make the infant ill. This "medicine" is supposed to remove any bad effect resulting from impurity in the mother's milk. In discussing this idea, one native who had worked on a white man's plantation told me that a white woman gives her child goat's milk, or tinned milk, to avoid contamination from her own milk. Tsengali is paid two or three strings of *tsera* (shell currency) every time he makes the "medicine."

853 Now that the proper medicine has been made, everyone

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is confident that the infant will be healthy, provided, of course, that he be well taken care of, and that his parents obey the necessary taboos. First, according to the native ideas, he must be adequately looked after. A mother who does not come and nurse her infant when he cries, if she is within hearing distance, is most unusual, and was never observed. The only reference to such an attitude was in folk-tales. There was one about a woman who left her baby on the beach while she went out on the reef to look for a certain kind of seaweed. The child cries out to his mother, "You come and give me milk." But the mother does not come. The infant cries out again, and this time the mother answers that she is busy getting seaweed and cannot come. A large black bird (*potot*) then flies down from a tree and kills the baby. The mother comes ashore and looks for her baby, and at first does not see him. Then she notices the bird running away, and at the same time finds her dead child. She weeps over the child. There is the usual mortuary feast.[1]

The young infant is an object of deep affection, not only to his mother, father, and sisters and brothers, but also to his grandmother, and to all the members of his clan and of the hamlet. It is only for the first few months that his maternal grandmother looks after him rather exclusively while the mother is away in the gardens. As soon as the child is able to toddle about a bit his care is divided among other members of the family. Most frequently it will be the father, and it is quite usual to see the father taking care of the baby while the mother is in the garden, or busy scraping taro. He will sit in the compound in front of the house, or on the beach, with the infant, playing with him, fondling and petting him. There is no differentiation on lines of sex in the display of affectionate tenderness towards the child. The father and

[1] The motif of this tale and the resulting moral occurred in only one other of the several hundred tales collected. In the other one the husband divorced his wife, who neglected her child.

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854 mother are equally tender towards their child, as are also other male and female relatives. A man plays with his child for hours at a time, talking pure foolishness to the baby. One man was holding an infant who could not yet walk and telling her that by and by she would dance well, and that she would go into the bush and eat fruit from the trees. The reference to the infant's future is made laughingly and affectionately.

But this does not mean that the mother is not also an affectionate parent. As soon as she has returned from her garden she feeds the infant, and then it is her turn to fondle and play with him. When a woman holds a baby she usually balances herself first on one foot and then on the other, making a kind of rocking motion. She does this when she is nursing the child also.

The whole hamlet regards the youngest infant as its pet and plaything. Whenever there are a group of natives together, whether it is the women resting and chatting after their communal cooking, or the men idling on the sand, the child is tossed about from one to the other, fondled, patted, [201] jumped up and down, and kissed (a pressing of the lips to the body with a clucking noise, resembling more an imitation of biting). Or they may croon one of the dance songs 854 to the infant. Lullabies are the songs which accompany the 533 ritual dances. The music and words have been handed down from generation to generation, and the infant hears them from his father, his mother, his grandmother, his aunts, uncles, and all the rest of the family. One woman in the hamlet where I lived was in the habit of lying on her back while her sister's infant, not yet able to walk, stood on her chest. The woman swayed the baby rhythmically as she sang to her.

854 Although the infant is petted and fussed over by the whole community, he is remarkably unspoiled. The child cries when he is hungry and wants his mother's breast, but most

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854 of the time he is smiling and cheerful, and apparently thoroughly enjoying the fuss being made over him.

In the hamlet, Penguli, in the life of which I participated most intimately, the youngest infant, Sapirosch, was about six months old when I arrived. She was quite the centre of interest in the community. There was always someone, adult or child (more frequently an adult), making a fuss over her. Every new gesture was reported and commented on. When the baby recognized me for the first time it was news in the community. Before I left she was just beginning to walk, or rather toddle, and this was an event of great importance and much discussed. She had not yet started to talk, but she was just beginning to make a few sounds which the fond parents (like many parents the world over) insisted were intelligible words. It was reported that she spoke my name, although I never heard her utter anything even faintly resembling it.

852 During the first two years of the child's life there are various important rites—when he receives a name, at the appearance of a first tooth, and at a feast for possible mates, and to celebrate his being strong and healthy. About a month after the baby is born a second birth feast is held. This is the larger one promised by the baby's maternal uncle the day after his birth.[1] About a hundred women of both moieties and from the neighbouring villages arrived at Ambwa very early in the morning, an hour or so after sunrise, carrying their taro. They immediately went to the hamlet of the infant Murri, where they sat down and began to scrape the taro and to prepare it to be baked. Women from one place generally sit together, although there is some mingling of women from different localities. Each woman has brought taro from her own garden, and a large amount from the garden of the infant's mother is also available.

[1] Murri was born September 7th. The first feast was held September 8th, and the second one, now being described, took place on October 12th.

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CARRYING THE BABY AND A LOAD FROM THE GARDEN

MOTHER NURSING HER BABY

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was given for Sapirosch, a female infant of about a year, or a little more, and Linga, a little girl of about three years of age, both of the hamlet of Penguli. It was a joint feast for the two given by their respective parents, and had been postponed because Ladawin, who is a potential and the preferred mate for Sapirosch, has been absent at the distant village of Karu. Sapirosch is the daughter of Ladawin's cross-cousin, which makes her his preferred mate. Whether they marry or not, they call each other by the term for husband and wife, *tumbo* and *malis*. Upon his return to Lesu preparations for the feast, which will be held the next day, are begun. The men of the hamlet go fishing and prepare their catch, and the women bring in taro from their gardens and prepare it to be baked in the *liga*. The next day the feast is held. The men eat in the cemetery. All the Hawk men eat the food prepared by the Eagle women, and they are in some subtle way supposed to be eating with Sapirosch, who is Eagle. Similarly, the Eagle men eat the food prepared by the Hawk women, and are supposed to be eating with Linga, who is Hawk. The feast is not taken too seriously. It is called *oning tsnintset*, literally eat play, i.e. a playful feast. The Hawk men say playfully to Sapirosch, "Why have you not prepared food for us, when you have already shown us your vulva?" The Eagle men say the same to Linga. Theoretically, all the men of the opposite moiety are possible mates for the two little girls, and the feast is held for all of them, but it is particularly for those who stand in the relationship of the preferred mate.

While the men are eating in the cemetery, the women eat more casually on the beach. The Eagle women eat the food prepared by the Hawk women, and *vice versa*.[1]

It is not only through the performance of the proper rites and by feeding and caring for the infant that the duties of

[1] I was told that a similar feast was held for the possible mates of a little boy, but none was held during my visit.

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the parents towards the infant are fulfilled, but they must also observe certain sexual taboos during this period of infancy, when the mother is nursing her child, which lasts from two to three years. During this time the mother and her husband are not supposed to have any sexual relations with each other, or with anyone else. As if to avoid temptation (at least with his wife) the man does not sleep in the same house with her. Usually he sleeps in the men's house. However, in the case of Sapirosch's parents, the father slept at home, while the child and her mother slept in the maternal grandmother's house in the same hamlet. The husband eats with his wife and is with her during the day, but they separate at night. It is thought that if the woman indulges in intercourse during this period her milk would be no good. When questioned as to why the taboo should apply to the father, the answer is that if the father comes and lifts up his child or plays with him after he has had intercourse, the infant will smell it from his skin, sicken, and perhaps die. My Lesu friends pointed in proof to one child, who is not able to walk, although past the walking age. I was told that it is because his parents "stole" sexual intercourse while the infant was still being suckled. The same natives point to the good health of the infants, Sapirosch and Ongus the second, and say that it is because the parents of these children have lived in continence. One more sophisticated native who had been away to work at the white man's capital, and who knows that it is the custom of a white man and his wife to have intercourse soon after the birth of their child, regards the white man's practice as disgusting.

It is interesting to note in this connection that a man and his wife observe the same sexual taboos, although for a much shorter time, when their pigs are giving birth. The owner of a pregnant pig and his mate are continent when the pig is expected to give birth, and also for the first month that the infant pig is being suckled. Should this taboo be broken it

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231 834 is thought that the young pig would sicken and die; and pigs are very valuable property.

262 854 The fish taboo which has already been mentioned in connection with pregnancy holds over to this period of infancy. The death of one infant about a month old was attributed to the fact that his father had eaten one of the taboo fish. He was a man formerly from a bush village, and therefore not cognizant of the fish taboos of the coast people. Actually, as far as I could observe, the infant died from an infected sore on the upper part of his leg.

854 834 602 Now, while it is both the parents, but more often certain clan relatives, matrilineal grandparents and uncles and aunts, in particular, who have duties to perform towards the infant, such as making the ritual feasts, taking care of him, etc., it is only the parents who are supposed to observe sexual taboos. A maternal aunt is called by the term mother (*Nangga*), and she has certain duties to perform for her nephew or niece, and a maternal uncle has many responsibilities in the giving of feasts, etc., but sexual taboos are restricted to the real parents.

854 The baby has been born. The women of the opposite moiety have fought playfully. His mother has suckled him. His maternal grandmother has taken care of him. So also has his father looked after him. He has been the affectionate pet of his whole hamlet. His maternal uncle and grandfather have given feasts for him at birth, when he cut his first tooth, and when he received his name. He has been betrothed, although everyone knows this is not to be taken too seriously. A feast has been given by his parents for his possible future mates. And during all this time his parents are supposed to have been sexually continent. The baby is now able to walk and to talk a little, and is approximately about three years old. He has entered childhood.

3: Chinnery G, E-5 (1929) 1931 OM10 New Ireland OM10

The record depends entirely on the information given me by mothers who named their children in the order in which they were born, and then described those who died by saying "died while still breast-feeding", or "died after having finished with breast-feeding". Others standing by refreshed the memory of a mother as to names of children and approximate age at death when she appeared uncertain. Relatively few mothers had to be assisted in this way, but in one or two villages the information is not to be relied upon.

On looking down this column one finds that deaths during lactation are more numerous in some villages than in others, e.g., seven villages on the lower road between Kandan and Karu average 33 per cent. of issue dying during lactation. It is in this vicinity that the high central range runs close to the coast, its slopes falling abruptly down to the water's edge where the villages are built usually on coral cliffs. The cold mountain winds and rains sweep through them day and night, producing a climatic condition of sudden changes from heat to cold, which must be exceedingly dangerous for people who live there practically in nakedness. The garden lands are scattered all over the place, mostly on the steep mountain sides, and garden work is probably more strenuous than it is in the districts nearer to Kavieng, especially for pregnant women, or women nursing children that have to be carried about by their mothers when working in their gardens or looking for shell fish in the sea. I saw infants being fed on solid foods, and it was quite a common thing to meet pregnant women or women with babies trudging up and down the mountain sides on their way to and from the gardens, with enormous bags of food, and infants sitting on top of the bags. On discussing with the men the question of women resting while pregnant, I was told that the women insist on doing their share of the work at this period for fear of being shamed by other women, especially the older ones, who laugh at them if they become more careful with pregnancy and talk in a superior way of what women did and endured in olden times. At the same time, my informant pointed out, a husband steps in and relieves his wife as much as possible of heavy work during the period of gestation and lactation. I was also told that men try to keep their wives out of the water during these periods by doing more shell-fishing themselves. This may be so in a few individual cases, but I am inclined to think that most of the women have to bear their burden alone, and, as the conditions of life are rather too strenuous at this end of the road for child-bearing women, the health of both the mother and the child suffers, with disastrous results to the child. This, to my mind, accounts for the low issue rate and heavy infant mortality rate in this group of villages. Being situated where they are, far from any plantation and over 100 miles from the Medical Officer at Kavieng, places them out of reach of the present medical service, which is not able to cope